

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, M.S. 19-31  
Sacramento, CA 95814



August 29, 1986

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 1-81-86

TO: All County Welfare Departments  
All Public and Private Adoption Agencies  
All DSS Adoption District Offices

SUBJECT: ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BROCHURE

The purpose of this notice is to request your input on the narrative of the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) brochure.

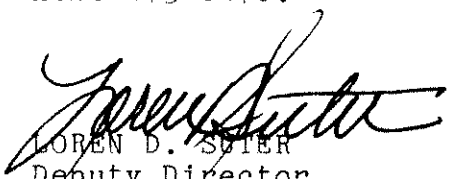
The narrative has been arranged in a question and answer format to provide an easy reference for prospective adoptive parents.

Your review and comments on the enclosed draft will help make this brochure effective in supplying prospective adoptive parents with information on AAP. Please return the draft by September 15, 1986, to the following address:

Department of Social Services  
Adoptions Branch  
744 P Street, M.S. 19-31  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attn: Jennifer Smith

Thank you for your cooperation in this important project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Jennifer Smith, Policy Consultant, at (916) 323-0470 or ATSS 473-0470.

  
LOREN D. SPIER  
Deputy Director  
Adult and Family Services Division

Enclosure

cc: CWDA

WHAT IS THE ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (AAP)?

The Adoption Assistance Program provides financial assistance including help with medical care to families who adopt special needs children.

WHO ARE THE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN?

A special needs child has one or more of the following characteristics which would make his or her adoption unlikely without financial assistance:

- member of a sibling group to be adopted by one family;
- ethnic background, race, color, language;
- mental, physical, medical or emotional handicap;
- age of three years or more;
- adverse parental background (e.g., drug addiction or mental illness).

WHAT KIND OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED?

- Medical assistance, and
- A monthly cash benefit to help pay the added expense of raising a special needs child.

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WHO DETERMINES WHETHER OR NOT AN ADOPTION SUBSIDY WILL BE PROVIDED?

The adoption agency determines whether or not a child is eligible for AAP benefits. The adoptive parents and the adoption agency negotiate a payment amount which the county welfare department pays. The adoptive parent(s) are not subject to an income eligibility requirement or means test for the purposes of determining AAP eligibility. However, when determining the amount of the AAP grant, the family's income and the resources available in the community are considered.

In a cooperative placement, the family's and child's agencies assess the needs of the child, the agencies work together to determine the amount of assistance and the time period the assistance will cover.

AT WHAT STAGE OF THE ADOPTION DO AAP PAYMENTS BEGIN?

Adoption assistance payments begin after the adoption has been finalized in court and the adoptive parents have assumed legal responsibility for the child.

Assistance can be provided prior to the finalization of the adoption if an interlocutory decree has been obtained from the court.

WHAT IF THE CHILD HAS A DISABILITY WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE ASSISTANCE NOW, BUT MAY REQUIRE ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE?

It is very important for an adoptive parent to complete and sign a Deferred Payment Agreement with the agency for special needs children before a final decree of adoption is entered. If problems develop with a child after the adoption has been finalized, the agreement will allow for financial assistance to help with the additional expenses.

Remember, the Deferred Payment Agreement must be signed prior to the finalization of the adoption in order to be effective and must specify those conditions for which AAP benefits will be paid.

CAN THE AGREEMENT BE REVISED IF THE CONDITION OF THE CHILD OR THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FAMILY CHANGE?

The initial AAP agreement must be signed before the finalization of the adoption and each child's case is reviewed at least every two years. The adoption assistance payment can be adjusted at any time if the family's circumstances or the child's needs have changed. However, any change in the amount or duration of AAP benefits requires the approval of the adopting family.

## HOW LONG MAY A CHILD RECEIVE AAP?

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Normally, AAP eligibility continues until the child reaches the age of 18. Eligibility may continue until the child reaches the age of 21 if the child has a mental or physical handicap which warrants the continuation of assistance.

## WILL ADOPTION ASSISTANCE CONTINUE IF THE CHILD MOVES TO ANOTHER STATE?

Federal law requires that eligibility for AAP benefits, including cash grant and medical assistance, continue when the family moves to another state. The original state in which adoption assistance was received should continue to make adoption assistance payments.

## WHAT KIND OF PARENT(S) SHOULD ADOPT A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

Adoption caseworkers seek mature adult(s) who have a stable family life, regular income, good health and a willingness to accept an adopted child as their own.

An adoptive parent should be flexible, patient and capable of dealing with changes in their expectations and life style.

Most importantly, an adoptive parent should be able to value their special child for what he/she can accomplish and appreciate his/her own unique qualities.

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

The Adoption Assistance Program benefits children and adoptive parents. The program allows children, who otherwise would not have been adopted, to have lifelong families. Special needs children have been placed in families where they receive support, love and kindness. This kind of environment allows the children to develop a positive self-image and eventually become productive members of our society. The children no longer have to risk transfer from one foster home to another with no hope of a permanent home.

The financial subsidy enables more prospective adoptive parents to pursue adoption without the fear of being unable to meet the additional expenses involved with raising a special needs child. The family can then concentrate on providing emotional support and a healthy environment for the child.

## SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Some of the special needs children who are available for adoption can be seen on the "Waiting Child" television program.

Sacramento - KXTV, Channel 10

Los Angeles - KNXT, Channel 2

San Diego - KGTV, Channel 10

The Children's Photo Album also includes special needs children who are available for adoption. The Album can be viewed at a licensed adoption agency in your area.

If you would like additional information on the adoption of  
special needs children, please contact:

[rubber stamp of agency  
providing brochure]